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Effect of Land Degradation on Farmers’ Food Security and Poverty Status Nexus Livelihood Diversification in Nigeria

YUSUF OLADIMEJI, ADUNNI SANI, ABDULLAHI HASSAN, ABUBAKAR SANI

Ahmadu Bello University, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Nigeria

Abstract

The objective of this study was to assess the effect of land degradation on smallholder farmers’ food security and poverty status nexus livelihood diversification in Kwara State, north central, Nigeria. Primary data with the aid of structured questionnaire was employed to collect the relevant data. A multistage random farming household survey resulted in four Local Government Areas, eight villages, 240 farmers which were filtered to 92 and 148 land graded farmers (LDF) and non-degraded farmers (NDF) respectively. Descriptive statistics, land degradation perception index, food security and poverty index, dichotomous regression models were used to achieve the aims of the study. The result indicates that 81.3% of the sampled farmers identified erosion as the main cause of land degradation with perception index of 4.3. Only 14.1% of LDF more than two-fifth, (42.6%) of NDF were food secured. The poverty status revealed that only 9.8% of LDF fall under the threshold of 0.00-20.00 category implying non-poor while 41.2% of NDF fall under this threshold. The results showed that the parameters that affected food security and poverty status of LDF varied from those that affected NDF. If the parameter was the same, the magnitude and direction differed. The average livelihood security composite index of LDF and NDF were 0.33 and 0.72 respectively implying that NDF had a low diversification value. The factors influencing livelihood diversification to off- and non-farm activities by LDF and NDF also differed in magnitudes, coefficients and directions. The results revealed that intercropping and mixed cropping are the most common strategies adopted by farmers in mitigating land degradation.

Keywords: Food security, land degraded farmers (LDF), mitigating strategies, poverty depth